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Assistive Devices and Cerebral Palsy: Factors Influencing the Use of Assistive Devices at Home by Children with Cerebral Palsy

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Abstract

Background

There is a growing awareness of the significance of gaining insights into device users' needs in their everyday usage in order to maximize the potential of assistive device intervention. However, current studies in this field are likely to focus more upon adult users' or adult carers' perspectives and, accordingly, the opinions of young users seem to be overlooked. In order to take the gap into consideration, this study aimed to explore the usability of assistive devices at home by children with cerebral palsy and consider the underlying factors related to the device usage in this setting mainly from the children's perspectives.

Methods

Semi-structured interviews were adopted as the main data collection instrument. A total of 30 participants were involved in the study, including 15 Taiwanese children with cerebral palsy and 15 mothers.

Results

The results showed a low frequency of device use at home by the participating children. Four factors leading to low device use at home were identified, including children's reluctance, mothers' perspectives, physical environmental barriers and device-related barriers.

Conclusions

The results highlight the need, when considering the usability of assistive devices, to take into account three interactive factors, namely, the personal, device and environmental factors. They also demonstrate the importance of taking children's different developmental stages and unique personal experiences into consideration in understanding the influence of assistive device intervention for children with cerebral palsy.

Keywords : Assistive Devices 、 Cerebral Palsy 、 Child Disability 、 Children's Views 、 Outcome Research